

1 **2008 WEST VIRGINIA SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE**

2 **POSITION PAPER 1200**

3 **Standing Committee on Finance**

4 **TITLE: DRUNK DRIVER VICTIM FUND**

5 **I. ISSUE**

6 Drunk driving threatens the safety of all West Virginians, putting individuals
7 and families at risk and causing senseless death, injury and property loss on our
8 state's highways.

9 **II. CURRENT FACTS AND STATISTICS**

10 In 2006, one-third of all roadway crashes in West Virginia were drunk driving
11 related, with 119 fatalities and over 2,600 persons injured. Sixteen percent (416) of
12 those injured sustaining severe or life-threatening trauma. In addition, drunk
13 driving crashes cost the public over \$700,000,000 in economic losses each year in
14 West Virginia.

15 Currently, there is a "Drunk Driving Prevention Fund" administered by the
16 Tax Commission and supported by sales tax collected from sales to the public and
17 retail licensees. This position paper is advocating for a separate fund to be entitled
18 "Drunk Driver Victim Program."

19 There is a "Crime Victims Compensation Fund" that helps pay victims of
20 crime, which includes drunk driver crashes.

21 **III. OPTIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

22 The West Virginia Legislature is currently studying WV D.U.I. laws. The laws
23 need to be reformed and strengthened to protect our citizens and visitors to our
24 state. It is unacceptable that more than 100 individuals die on our highways and
25 thousands are injured on an annual basis. It is hoped that stronger drunk driving
26 laws will reduce the senseless killing, injury and property loss on our highways. In
27 the meantime, the proposed "Drunk Driving Victim Compensation Fund" will assist
28 with the costs associated with injuries, deaths and property losses.

29 "Sin Taxes," as these taxes are also known, are extremely popular with the
30 general public and can generate funding to support the "Drunk Driving Victims
31 Compensation Fund."

32 **IV. FUNDING**

33 The "Crime Victims Compensation Fund" is funded through court costs that
34 offenders have to pay. "Drunk Driver Prevention Fund" is funded by a six percent
35 excise tax on beverages sold by private retail liquor stores to private clubs. The
36 "Drunk Driving Victims Compensation Fund" will be funded by the following:

- 37 • One cent per 12 ounces of beer sold at the wholesale level (based on
38 331 cans in a barrel)
- 39 • One cent per 12 ounces of wine sold at the wholesale level (based on
40 three cans in a liter)

41 This should provide \$4,500,000 for beer + \$163,000 for wine =
42 \$4,663,000

- 43 • It is unknown at this time the amount of liquor revenue to be gained
44 via the ABCC additional one percent markup of wholesale liquor sales.

45 Monies derived from the above calculations should be of some assistance to
46 the "Crime Victims Fund" in that drunk driving victims could be paid from this fund.

47 • **RESOURCE INFORMATION**

48 Annual Assessment of Motor Vehicle Crash Analysis

49 Suzanne Dobson, WV Tax Department

50 Donna Hawkins, MADD

1 **2008 WEST VIRGINIA SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE**

2 **POSITION PAPER 3100**

3 **Standing Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**

4 **TITLE: REDUCED HUNTING AND LICENSE FEES**

5 **I. ISSUE**

6 Younger senior citizens (i.e., 55–65 years) should be offered a reduced rate
7 for hunting and fishing licenses.

8 **II. CURRENT FACTS AND STATISTICS**

9 The current rate for seniors over 65 for licenses is zero. The rate currently for
10 hunting and fishing licenses for a year is \$38 for all other West Virginians.

11 Hunting has fallen off in West Virginia, and we believe it is because of the
12 cost of the license. Fees for licenses have become a source of revenue for state
13 programs, and this has also led to higher licensing fees.

14 West Virginia is an economically poor state (medium household income for a
15 family of four is \$40,000 a year), the third lowest in the nation.

16 The deer population is far too great for nature to allow a sustainable
17 population.

18 Deer meat does not go unused in West Virginia, but is a staple of family diets
19 and food pantries.

20 For every hunting license sold in the state, the federal government adds a
21 subsidy.

22 **III. OPTIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

23 Reducing licenses to \$20 will result in more hunters and fisherman taking to
24 woods and streams.

25 More food can be provided for more people.

26 The present density of the deer population can be balanced.

27 Additional revenue will be generated.

28 **IV. FUNDING**

29 This bill will reduce state income by \$18 per license. However, it is felt that
30 this loss will be easily reimbursed by the increase in the hunters in the field, and
31 less damage for farmers, drivers, and insurance companies. Food pantries will
32 benefit financially as will families' supplies of meat. In addition, younger seniors
33 tend to take youngsters to hunt and fish, continuing our unique West Virginia rural
34 way of life. Whatever the licensing fee, the federal government will continue its
35 subsidy.

36 **V. RESOURCE INFORMATION**

37 Conversation with retired Director of West Virginia DNR

38 <http://www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/huntlicense.shtm>

1 **2008 WEST VIRGINIA SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE**

2 **POSITION PAPER 4100**

3 **Standing Committee on Education**

4 **TITLE: FUNDING FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

5 **I. ISSUE**

6 Changing the Legislative Rule for funding the West Virginia Public Libraries.

7 **II. CURRENT FACTS AND STATISTICS**

8 In the past the amount of state funding a library received was determined
9 solely on a per capita basis. This will change beginning with the 2009–2010 fiscal
10 year. The change will require that local funding will determine the amount of state
11 funding a library will receive. To receive its state funds each library will have to
12 match the per capita amount with local funding.

13 There will be two types of local funds. The first are local funds that come
14 from tax based entities (city, county and board of education). The second are local
15 non-taxed based funds, which include donations, fund raising, grants, etc. The
16 important point to remember is that the amount of non-taxed based funds counted
17 cannot exceed the total tax based local funds.

18 **III. OPTIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

19 The funding of public libraries in West Virginia is a partnership. The key factor
20 in any decision is that public libraries are created by local governing authorities.
21 Chapter 10 of the West Virginia Code gives the authority for creating a library to
22 county commissions, boards of education and municipalities. It can be one of these
23 bodies or a combination of them but organizations must participate in the funding of
24 the library.

25 Until 2007 the Library Commission's Administrative Rule said two-thirds of
26 the operating budget for the library had to come from local sources. However, a
27 study of public libraries was done in 1999 that recommended a 50/50 share
28 between the local governments and the state. This was based on the taxing
29 structure in West Virginia. Local governments have few sources of revenue. The
30 recommendation stated that \$6.50 from the state and \$6.50 from the local

31 government for a total of not less than \$13.00 per capita. This figure was not to be
32 the optimum. It was only intended to be a base. The national average for operating
33 income is \$33.87.

34 Funding for library systems in West Virginia is very uneven. There are eleven
35 local library laws that set a base for funding of the public library system. Each law is
36 different and not all provide sufficient funding for the library. Only Kanawha County
37 at \$36.94 exceeds the national average. Clay County is the lowest at \$5.56 per
38 capita from all funding sources.

39 There are two issues that need to be addressed in funding libraries. First,
40 local government must fund at a reasonable level the library it created. The state
41 through legislation could assist local government in this task by giving them a
42 funding stream or by mandating that a portion of the existing funding streams go to
43 the support of the library. For example, the legislature could pass a law that a given
44 percentage of the property taxes in a county go to the support of the public library.
45 This should address all local government, county commissions, boards of education,
46 and municipalities. The second issue to address is an increase in the state grants-
47 in-aid to libraries. The libraries received \$1 million dollars in the 2008 Legislative
48 session. One million dollars moved the grants from \$4.06 per capita to \$4.61. This
49 is still well below the recommended \$6.50.

50 It must be understood that the study recommendation of \$13.00 per capita is
51 not enough to operate the library. It is only a baseline. If the Legislature looks at
52 funding legislation for libraries, the local contribution must go beyond the \$6.50.

53 In leaner times, more families are visiting their local library. The American
54 Library Association says usage nationwide was 10 percent higher in the past year
55 due to the economic downturn. Librarians around the country say that the recent
56 increase in visits may be the largest in memory. With the enforcement of the new
57 Legislative Rule, a lot of our small libraries will not be able to exist. A decrease in
58 funding for the library does not mean a decrease in the use of the library. As local
59 governments struggle to meet the needs of the community, some of our small
60 libraries will probably face the problem of decreasing their hours or possibly closing.

Without public support, library budgets can be a tempting target for governments to cut funding. Not only do libraries provide books but also they provide computers. In some small towns that is the only place where people can get high speed internet. The libraries provide many services to the community, such as reading programs, literacy programs and, meeting space. The advantages of having a local library are too numerous to mention.

IV. FUNDING

Funding for public libraries should at least go up to \$6.50 from the state and \$6.50 from the local government for a total of not less than \$13.00 per capita. That still falls well below the national average of \$33.87 for operating income.

The Legislature could pass a law that would give a percentage of the county property taxes to support the public library. Also, the Legislature could allow a percentage of the hotel-motel taxes to be used to support the public library. All counties could also run a levy of one to two percent to go to public libraries.

V. RESOURCE INFORMATION

Debbie Goddard - Rainelle Public Librarian

Amy Farr - Greenbrier Librarian - Service Center Director

J. D. Waggoner - West Virginia Library Commissioner

The Charleston Gazette - September 2, 2008

1 **2008 WEST VIRGINIA SILVER HAIR LEGISLATURE**

2 **POSITION PAPER 4200**

3 **Standing Committee on Roads and Transportation**

4 **TITLE: MOBILE DMV UNIT(S) FOR COUNTIES WITHOUT REGIONAL**
5 **OFFICES**

6 **I. ISSUE**

7 The distance between regional offices and the citizen's residence creates a
8 financial hardship for all residents in remote areas.

9 **II. CURRENT FACTS AND STATISTICS**

10 The Department of Motor Vehicles does not have license centers or exam
11 centers in 30 counties in West Virginia. Regional offices do not stay open for
12 extended hours, nor are they open on weekends.

13 Thousands of West Virginia citizens must travel many miles (in some cases
14 over 100 miles round trip) to renew a license, get a new drivers license, learners
15 permit or take drivers exam.

16 Citizens may lose a day of work and wages for renewals. Students lose
17 valuable instruction time, missing at least two or three days of school to take exams
18 for learner's permits and driver's exam. This unlicensed student must be
19 transported by another licensed driver, usually a parent who may lose work and
20 wages.

21 The cost of gasoline is an outrageous price and costing many as much as (if
22 not more than) \$25.00 in gasoline, not counting the other expenses.

23 Most regional offices are crowded with citizens, and long waiting periods are
24 required to just get to the desk to proceed with business. Telephone numbers for
25 Regional offices are not available to public. Equipment failure is not known until a
26 person has traveled to the Regional office only to find the computer is not working
27 that day, or that the required documentation to renew or take a test has not been
28 brought from home.

29 **III. OPTIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

30 All of the above place a financial burden and inconvenience on the citizens of

West Virginia. The government should be aiding the public, not burdening its citizens. Therefore, we propose a fully equipped (all necessary equipment to issue a new driver's license or renew an existing license) mobile unit(s) to be provided to the remote counties of West Virginia to assist the citizens in that area at least two days a month.

The DMV has in their records the renewals due each month and could use that information to determine the scheduling of the unit(s).

Possibly this unit could also be used for Homeland Security/FEMA in the event of a Crisis or Natural tragedy.

IV. FUNDING

The cost of a mobile unit and two employees. This cost could be covered by an additional \$1.00 per year for driver's license, renewal, etc.

V. RESOURCE INFORMATION

WV DMV website

Public Opinion

Personal experiences

School attendance record

Newspaper: Charleston Gazette, Intermountain